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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE PATH

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XXXVI—No. 11 **September, 1948**

FOR our aid the law of Karma works well and ceaselessly. "Those whom you help will help you in other lives," is the declaration. In ages past, perhaps, we knew those who long since have passed up to greater heights. The very moment in the long series of incarnations we come near to where they are pursuing their pilgrimage, they at once extend assistance, whether that be on the material or moral planes. And it makes no difference whether one or the other is aware of who is assisting or who is being assisted. Inflexible law guides the current and brings about the result. Thus the members of the whole human family reciprocally act on one another, forced into it by a law which is as kind as it is great. —W.Q.J.

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A U M

The oneness of the soul with the Self is already a fact, and not a thing that requires a further effort to bring about. —SANKARACHARYA

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXVI September, 1948 No. 11

IS THEOSOPHY VAGUE?

H. P. BLAVATSKY declared quite candidly to theosophists that Theosophy, *alone,* would enable them to form a nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity and thus prevent mankind from helplessly succumbing in new depths of materialism. Nothing less than universal brotherhood, she suggested, will serve as a theosophical ideal, but the remoteness of the goal in no way implies vagueness as to ways and means. The precise value of the theosophical philosophy—and the real justification for its existence—lies in its power to connect every human action and thought with its consequences near and distant, and therefore to provide each man with the materials for judging which motives and lines of conduct will infallibly contribute to the good of all.

In the process of recording the general doctrines of Theosophy, H. P. Blavatsky went far beyond the exposition of intellectual abstractions. She brought the theosophical ideas to life in the world. Setting living truths among the manifold disguises and dissemblances of popular conventions, H.P.B. revealed the mockery of appearances and invited the strong-minded to look beneath the veneer of "culture." The component parts of the race mind—its strengths and weaknesses, its false ideas and perverted truths, its buried knowledge and forgotten ideals—were precipitated out for the individual to weigh and measure against as much of theosophical truth as he could put to use. From the consideration of tendencies in thought and action of people as a whole, the theosophist might gradually gain the objectivity with which to approach

the meaning of his own karma and to find in it nothing unique, except the particular *combination* of habits, tendencies, mistakes, and attitudes he formerly studied as social phenomena. Then, when ready, he could take up the ancient challenge: the preservation of justice in the moral nature, the destruction of wickedness in human nature, and the establishment of righteousness in his whole being.

The messenger of Theosophy had the task of explaining, to an era of infinitely specialized sciences, endlessly ramified religions, and uncounted individual philosophies, the meaning of a single, changeless body of laws. How describe, even with the analogy of mathematics, a system of thought which is studied from center to circumference, beginning with universal principles that are the most transcendent abstractions the human mind can conceive? How convey the radical difference between a psychic "confession" and the method of self-study the theosophist will encounter? The average man can scarcely be induced to feel responsible for his *reactions* to heredity and environment: how is he to appreciate what it means to work on the hypothesis that the Ego is accountable for the whole of its heredity and for every influence operating through its conditioned existence?

These difficulties are also met, in smaller ways, by the individual student. In discussing Theosophy, he is faced with the problem of somehow indicating the universal purview of the philosophy, without making it seem just another sweeping assertion about the nature of things. He would like to express its power to engage *the whole man* in an integrated search for knowledge, but, by those who have not so engaged themselves, will he not be interpreted as advocating an intense sectarianism under a different guise? Again, the student is sometimes at a loss to show how Theosophy, far from narrowing his horizon and confining his interests, has extended both, in directions he would otherwise never have considered exploring. So naturally does the theosophical literature expand his acquaintance with all branches of learning, that the effect is not of distinct intellectual acquirement, and many times is not respected by the specialist whose whole concern is with details and particulars. Theosophy is an attitude of mind toward *all* events and ideas, no matter how mundane, and theosophical study sharpens the perception of the necessary interrelations among them all.

It is noticed, for example, that to the theosophist the finding of ancient landmarks of bygone civilizations is not an obscure archaeological detail, but new material relating to human cycles and the reincarnation of peoples; he is aware that *The Secret Doctrine* weaves many such discoveries into the history of man's prior lives and oldest traditions. Tales of extraordinary or fantastic customs reported in local myths about an obscure community recall fragments from the thousand-and-one illustrations used in *Isis Unveiled* to demonstrate the psychic, mental and spiritual potentialities of man's being. The Sunday magazine section spins an improbable "yarn" about a trip to the moon—but Patanjali's Yogi reached the sun, the moon, and the fixed stars without moving at all. The repercussions of the American commerce in African slaves continue to the seventh generation, and beyond, but a footnote in *The Key to Theosophy* furnishes a compulsive and unforgettable commentary on the initial karma of the tragic social war.

"Theosophy" is omnipresent to the theosophical student. Policies and programs he may once have thought outside his responsibility have, in view of the Three Objects, become matters needing his attention and decision. Capital punishment and the colonial policy; theories of education and the psychology of medicine; juvenile delinquency and the theory of civil rights; the ethics of science; para-psychological research and unregulated hypnotism; the sectarian struggle for power and the new victories of materialism—none of these issues were neglected by the Teachers of Theosophy. Nor did H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge wait for a social problem to be raised in their "personal" lives. It was enough that the problem existed, recognized, it might be, by a handful of reformers, or not yet recognized at all. They saw in advance what would be its future influence. The original magazine literature of Theosophy, in especial, is a consistent demonstration that every human difficulty, if met with the attitude as well as the principles of philosophy, will educate the conscience and deepen the sympathies that bring brotherhood into the civilizations of men.

Theosophy alone can eradicate the perversity of the various doctrines of special privilege and "spiritual" favoritism which have, in H.P.B.'s words, "become ingrained into the innermost life of the Western nations." Theosophy alone, by its fundamental teach-

ing of the one origin of all mankind, can remove, she said, "the causes which make Universal Brotherhood a Utopia at present." These declarations, supported by the evidence assembled in theosophical writings, are the warrant for naming Theosophy *intrinsically* "the most serious movement of this age." The promulgation of its doctrines is not for the sake of converts nor for the multiplication of believers. Nothing is added to the usefulness of Theosophy by those who regard it as something to be believed or disbelieved. It is discovered, proved and understood in its real nature only by the few who see through it their responsibility to Humanity, and who work with it for the benefit of others.

Applying Theosophy

How shall we apply Theosophy in daily life? First, to think what we are in reality, on arising; to endeavor to realize what this small segment of our great existence may mean in the long series of such existences; to resolve to live throughout the day from the highest of our realizations; to see in each event and circumstance a reproduction in small or in great of that which has been; and to deal with each and every one of these from that same high point. Resolve to deal with them as though each had a deep occult meaning and presented an opportunity to further the successes of the past, or undo the errors. Thus living from moment to moment, hour to hour, life will be seen as a portion of a great web of action and reaction, intermeshed at every point, and connected with the Soul which provided the energy that sustained it. If each event is so considered throughout the day, be it small or great, the power to guide and control your energies will in no long time be yours. The smaller cycles of the personal ego will be related to the Divine Ego and the force that flows from the latter will show itself in every way, will strengthen the whole nature, and will even change the conditions, physical and otherwise, which surround you.

—Robert Crosbie

"THEOSOPHIST" EDITORIAL NOTES

VIII: Spiritual and Psychological Research

[The present article is taken from "Reply to an English F.T.S.," published in *The Theosophist,* September, October, and November, 1883. ("An English F.T.S." addressed some questions to the Adepts on A. P. Sinnett's then new book *Esoteric Buddhism.*) On the authorship of the Reply, we may quote a statement made in answer to a correspondent and printed in the Supplement to the *Theosophist,* February, 1884. The Editor writes: "Why should our old and trusted American friend [G. L. Ditson] address us as though *we* were the author of the 'Replies to an English F.T.S.'? It was explained, we believe, and made very clear that the letter of the English F.T.S. being addressed to the Mahatmas, it was not our province to answer the scientific queries contained in it, even if we had the ability to do so, something we never laid a claim to. In point of fact, however, there is not one word in the 'Replies' that we could call our own. We have preserved packs of MSS. in the hand-writing of our Masters and their Chelas; and if we got them sometimes copied in the office, it was simply to avoid desecration at the hands of the printer's devil."

The portion of the "Reply" here reprinted is an introduction to the answers, some of which will appear in subsequent numbers of this series.—Eds. Theosophy.]

IT was not in contemplation, at the outset of the work begun in *Fragments,* to deal as fully with the scientific problems of cosmic evolution, as now seems expected. A distinct promise was made, as Mr. Sinnett is well aware, to acquaint the readers of this Journal with the outlines of Esoteric doctrines and—no more. A good deal would be given, much more kept back, especially from the columns of a magazine which reaches a promiscuous public.

This seeming unwillingness to share with the world some of nature's secrets that may have come into the possession of the few, arises from causes quite different from the one generally assigned. It is not Selfishness erecting a Chinese wall between occult science and those who would know more of it, without making any distinction between the simply curious profane, and the earnest, ardent seeker after truth. Wrong, and unjust are those who think so; who attribute to indifference for other people's welfare a policy neces-

sitated, on the contrary, by a farseeing universal philanthropy; who accuse the custodians of lofty physical and spiritual though long rejected truths, of holding them high above the people's heads. In truth, the inability to reach them lies entirely with the seekers. Indeed, the chief reason among others for such a reticence, at any rate, with regard to secrets pertaining to physical sciences—is to be sought elsewhere.* It rests entirely on the *impossibility* of imparting that, the nature of which is, at the present stage of the world's development, beyond the comprehension of the would-be learners, however intellectual and however scientifically trained may be the latter. This tremendous difficulty is now explained to the few, who, besides having read *Esoteric Buddhism,* have studied and *understood* the several occult axioms approached in it. It is safe to say that it will not be even vaguely realized by the general reader, but will offer the pretext for sheer abuse. Nay, it has already.

It is simply that the gradual development of man's seven principles and physical senses *has* to be coincident and on parallel lines with Rounds and Root-races. Our *fifth* race has so far developed but its *five* senses. Now, if the *Kama* or *Will*-principle of the "Fourth-rounders" has already reached that stage of its evolution when the automatic acts, the unmotivated instincts and impulses of its childhood and youth, instead of following external stimuli, will have become acts of will framed constantly in conjunction with the mind *(Manas),* thus making of every man on earth of that race *a free agent,* a *fully* responsible being—the *Kama* of our hardly adult *fifth* race is only slowly approaching it. As to the 6th sense of this, our race, it has hardly sprouted above the soil of its materiality. It is highly unreasonable, therefore, to expect for the men of the 5th to sense the nature and essence of that which will be fully *sensed* and perceived but by the 6th—let alone the 7th race—*i.e.,* to enjoy the legitimate outgrowth of the evolution and endowments of the future races with only the help of our present limited senses.

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*Needless to remind our correspondent that what is said here, applies only to secrets the nature of which when revealed will not be turned into a weapon against humanity in general, or its units—men. Secrets of such class could not be given to any one but a regular chela of many years' standing and during his successive initiations; mankind as a whole has first to come of age, to reach its majority, which will happen but toward the beginning of its sixth race—before such mysteries can be safely revealed to it. The *vril* is not altogether a fiction, as some chelas and even "lay" chelas know.

The exceptions to this quasi universal rule have been hitherto found only in some rare cases of constitutional, abnormally precocious individual evolutions; or, in such, where by early training and special methods, reaching the stage of the 5th rounders, some men in addition to the natural gift of the latter have fully developed (by certain occult methods) their sixth, and in still rarer cases their seventh, sense. As an instance of the former class may be cited the Seeress of Prevorst; a creature born *out of time,* a rare precocious growth, ill adapted to the uncongenial atmosphere that surrounded her, hence a martyr ever ailing and sickly. As an example of the other, the Count St. Germain may be mentioned. Apace with the anthropological and physiological development of man runs his spiritual evolution. To the latter, purely intellectual growth is often more an impediment than a help. An instance: Radiant stuff—"the fourth state of matter"—has been hardly discovered, and no one—the eminent discoverer himself not excepted—has yet any idea of its full importance, its possibilities, its connection with physical phenomena, or even its bearing upon the most puzzling scientific problems. How then can any "Adept" attempt to prove the fallacy of much that is predicated in the nebular and solar theories when the only means by which he could successfully prove his position is an appeal to, and the exhibition of, that sixth sense consciousness which the physicist cannot postulate? Is not this plain?

Thus, the obstacle is not that the "Adepts" would "forbid inquiry," but rather the personal, present limitations of the senses of the average, and even of the scientific man. To undertake the explanation of that which at the outset would be rejected as a physical impossibility, the outcome of hallucination, is unwise and even harmful, because premature. It is in consequence of such difficulties that the psychic production of physical phenomena—save in exceptional cases—is strictly forbidden.

And now, "Adepts" are asked to meddle with astronomy—a science which, of all the branches of human knowledge, has yielded the most accurate of information, afforded the most mathematically correct data, and of the achievements in which the men of science feel the most justly proud! It is true that on the whole astronomy has achieved triumphs more brilliant than those of most other

sciences. But if it has done much in the direction of satisfying man's straining and thirsting mind and his noble aspirations for knowledge, physical as to its most important particulars, it has ever laughed at man's puny efforts to wrest the great secrets of Infinitude by the help of only mechanical apparatus. While the spectroscope has shown the probable similarity of terrestrial and sidereal substance, the chemical actions peculiar to the variously progressed orbs of space have not been detected, nor proven to be identical with those observed on our own planet. In this particular, Esoteric Psychology may be useful. But who of the men of science would consent to confront it with their own handiwork? Who of them would recognize the superiority and greater trustworthiness of the Adept's knowledge over their own hypotheses, since in their case they can claim the mathematical correctness of their deductive reasonings based on the alleged unerring precision of the modern instruments; while the Adepts can claim but their knowledge of the ultimate nature of the materials they have worked with for ages, resulting in the phenomena produced. However much it may be urged that a deductive argument, besides being an incomplete syllogistic form, may often be in conflict with fact; that their major propositions may not always be correct, although the predicates of their conclusions seem correctly drawn—spectrum analysis will not be acknowledged as inferior to purely spiritual research. Nor, before developing his sixth sense, will the man of science concede the error of his theories as to the Solar spectrum, unless he abjure, to some degree at least, his marked weakness for conditional and disjunctive syllogisms ending in eternal dilemmas.

At present, the "Adepts" do not see any help for it. Were these invisible and unknown profanes to interfere with—not to say openly contradict—the *dicta* of the Royal Society, contempt and ridicule, followed by charges of crass ignorance of the first elementary principles of modern science would be their only reward; while those who would lend an ear to their "vagaries," would be characterized immediately as types of the "mild lunatics" of the age. Unless, indeed, the whole of that august body should be initiated into the great Mysteries at once, and without any further ado or the preliminary and usual preparations or training, the F.R.S.'s could be *miraculously* endowed with the required sixth sense, the Adepts fear

the task would be profitless. The latter have given quite enough, little though it may seem, for the purposes of a first trial. The sequence of martyrs to the great universal truths has never once been broken; and the long list of known and unknown sufferers headed with the name of Galileo, now closes with that of Zöllner. Is the world of science aware of the real cause of Zöllner's premature death? When the fourth dimension of space becomes a scientific reality like the fourth state of matter, he may have a statue raised to him by grateful posterity. But this will neither recall him to life, nor will it obliterate the days and months of mental agony that harassed the soul of this intuitional, farseeing, modest genius, made even after his death to receive the donkey's kick of misrepresentation and to be publicly charged with lunacy.

Hitherto, Astronomy could grope between light and darkness only with the help of the uncertain guidance offered it by analogy. It has reduced to fact and mathematical precision the physical motion and the paths of the heavenly bodies, and—no more. So far, it has been unable to discover with any approach to certainty the physical constitution of either Sun, stars, or even cometary matter. Of the latter, it seems to know no more than was taught 5,000 years ago by the official astronomers of old Chaldea and Egypt; namely, that it is vaporous, since it transmits the rays of stars and planets without any sensible obstruction. But let the modern chemist be asked to tell one whether this matter is in any way connected with, or akin to, that of any of the external gases he is acquainted with; or again, to any of the solid elements of his chemistry. The probable answer received will be very little calculated to solve the world's perplexity; since, all hypotheses to the contrary, cometary matter does not appear to possess even the common law of adhesion or of chemical affinity. The reason for it is very simple. And the truth ought long ago to have dawned upon the experimentalists, since our little world (though so repeatedly visited by the hairy and bearded travellers, enveloped in the evanescent veil of their tails, and otherwise brought in contact with that matter) has neither been smothered by an addition of nitrogen gas, nor deluged by an excess of hydrogen, nor yet perceptibly affected by a surplus of oxygen. The essence of cometary matter must be—and the "Adepts" say *is —totally different from any of the chemical or physical character-*

istics with which the greatest chemists and physicists of the Earth are familiar—all recent hypotheses to the contrary notwithstanding. It is to be feared that before the real nature of the elder progeny of *Mula Prakriti* is detected, Mr. Crookes will have to discover matter of the *fifth* or *extra* radiant state;—*et seq.*

Thus, while the astronomer has achieved marvels in the elucidation of the visible relations of the orbs of space, he has learnt nothing of their inner constitution. His science has led him no further towards a reading of that inner mystery, than has that of the geologist, who can tell us only of the Earth's superficial layers, and that of the physiologist who has until now been able to deal only with man's outer shell, or *Sthula Sarira.* Occultists have asserted and go on asserting daily the fallacy of judging the essence by its outward manifestations, the ultimate nature of the life-principle by the circulation of the blood, mind by the gray matter of the brain, and the physical constitution of Sun, stars and comets by our terrestrial chemistry and the matter of our own planet.

Verily, and indeed, no microscopes, spectroscopes, telescopes, photometers or other physical apparatuses can ever be focussed on either the *macro* or *micro*-cosmical highest principles, nor will the *mayavirupa* of either yield its mystery to physical inquiry. The methods of spiritual research and psychological observation are the only efficient agencies to employ. We have to proceed by analogy in every thing, to be sure. Yet the candid men of science must very soon find out that it is not sufficient to examine a few stars—a handful of sand, as it were, from the margin of the shoreless, cosmic ocean—to conclude that these stars are the same as all other stars—our earth included; that because they have attained a certain very great telescopic power, and gauged an area enclosed in the smallest of spaces when compared with what remains, they have, therefore, concurrently perfected the survey of all that exists within even that limited space. For, in truth, they have done nothing of the kind. They have had only a superficial glance at that which is made visible to them under the present conditions, with *the limited power of their vision.* And even though it were helped by telescopes of a hundred-fold stronger power than that of Lord Rosse, or the new Lick Observatory, the case would not alter.

No physical instrument will ever help astronomy to scan distances of the immensity of which that of Sirius, situated at the trifle of 130,125,000,000,000 miles away from the outer boundary of the spherical area, or, even that of *(a)* Capella with its extra trifle of 295,355,000,000,000* miles still further away, can give them, as they themselves are well aware—the faintest idea. For, though an Adept is unable to cross bodily (*i.e.,* in his astral shape) the limits of the solar system, yet he *knows* that far stretching beyond the telescopic power of detection, there are systems upon systems, the smallest of which would, when compared with the system of Sirius, make the latter seem like an atom of dust imbedded in the great Shamo desert. The eye of the astronomer, who thinks he also knows of the existence of such systems, has never rested upon them, has never caught of them even that spectral glimpse, fanciful and hazy as the incoherent vision in a slumbering mind—that he has occasionally had of other systems, and yet he verily believes he has gauged INFINITUDE! And yet these immeasurably distant worlds are brought as clear and near to the spiritual eye of the *astral* astronomer as a neighbouring bed of daisies may be to the eye of the botanist.

Thus, the "Adepts" of the present generation, though unable to help the profane astronomer by explaining the ultimate essence, or even the material constitution of star and planet, since European science, knowing nothing as yet of the existence of such substances or more properly of their various states or conditions has neither proper terms for, nor can form any adequate idea of them by any description, they may, perchance, be able to prove what this matter *is not*—and this is more than sufficient for all present purposes. The next best thing to learning what is true is to ascertain what is *not* true.

Having thus anticipated a few general objections, and traced a limit to expectation, since there is no need of drawing any veil of mystery before "An English F.T.S.," his few questions may be partially answered. The negative character of the replies draws a sufficiently strong line of demarcation between the views of the Adepts and those of Western science, to afford some useful hints at least.

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*The figures are given from the mathematical calculations of exoteric Western astronomy. Esoteric astronomy may prove them false some day.

FINGER-POSTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

John Scotus Erigena

IT is too late, in the twentieth century, to attempt a philosophical transformation of the Catholic faith. Religious thinkers may try to reinterpret Catholic dogma on original sin, on hell, damnation and the "free will" of God, on the "only-begotten Son" and the vicarious atonement, but modern speculation cannot cross the line from religion to philosophy, from irrational moral preachments to a science of ethics. To do so would be to trespass on the forbidden ground of Platonism and pantheism, and to support the heretical doctrine that man's moral evolution is first, last, and all the time his own doing and his own responsibility. A thousand years ago, the Catholic religion was not so immune. The guardians of the faith were not all so certain of the precise manner in which the "final and complete revelation" they had in charge was to be construed. The surface of Catholic thought had not yet frozen over completely, and some open water permitted free swimming for an occasional hardy soul.

If, as H. P. Blavatsky suggests, the historical Jesus actually lived about two centuries before the year 1, the millennial cycle has revolved twice since the appearance of the "Galilean adept" from whom Christianity nominally takes its origin. The first thousand-year period brings us to the ninth century, in which the "bright spot of light" is an Irish scholar, John the Scot (Ireland was then known as *Scotia major*). So notable was the thought of this philosopher—usually referred to as John Erigena—that he is one of the few figures of the Middle Ages singled out by H. P. Blavatsky for special mention. In *Isis Unveiled* (1, 242), Erigena is said to have outlined "in his bold philosophy" the "doctrine of emanation and absorption, the nirvana in short," and the reader is invited by H.P.B. to read his *De Divisione Naturae* to convince himself of this truth. Actually, Erigena breathes so free a spirit in philosophy that he seems not to belong to the medieval age of Christendom at all. His mind, either indifferent or unaware of the limitations of dogma, generates major and minor heresies as a matter of course, and the

theosophical student, expecting quite another temper from a learned Catholic Doctor, will feel surprisingly at home with Erigena's eager and searching intellect.

W. P. Ker tells, in *The Dark Ages* (p. 162), how Erigena was called upon by a worried Bishop (Hincmar) to refute a too logical development of Augustine's theory of predestination. The outcome of Erigena's argument against "the excessive cruelties of predestination" is typical of what generally happened when he encountered hard and fast theological concepts. Ker relates that Erigena "would not be limited to the requisite amount of controversy, and before the Irish philosopher could be checked, he had refuted Sin and Hell."

Erigena's treatise on Predestination was condemmed in 855, and four hundred years later, in 1225, his major work, *The Division of Nature,* was sentenced to the flame. But during his life as after it, theological arguments did not succeed in obliterating his work, and the debt of later thinkers to this pioneer of Western philosophy is almost incalculable.

The facts of Erigena's life are meagre, but even the briefest narrative touches great names and unites strong currents of thought and philosophy. The account given by Reginald Lane Poole in his *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning* (New York: 1932) is singularly befitting:

> . . . Johannes Scotus, called Ierugena or Erigena, is a figure unique not so much for the originality of his views as for the confidence with which he discovered them latent in Christianity. He is unrestrained by the habits of thought of his own age, in which he appears as a meteor, none knew whence. The mystery which surrounds him is appropriate for his solitary person. From the schools of Ireland he drifted, some time before the year 847, to the court of Charles the Bald, like those former 'merchants of wisdom' with whom tradition afterwards associated him. The welcome he won from that liberal-minded prince and their intimate comradeship, the gaiety and sprightly humour of the Irish sage, his removal to England after Charles's death, and his new career as a teacher under the auspices of king Alfred, finally his murder at Malmesbury; all these things are recounted by later annalists. His own time knows only that he was 'a holy man' who came from Ireland and had received no ecclesiastical orders.

Henry Bett, whose *Johannes Scotus Erigena* (Cambridge: 1925) is the most extensive study in English of Erigena's teachings and

influence, states that Erigena's birth must be dated between 800 and 815, and that King Charles is said to have made the Scot head of the palace school which had originated in the days of Charlemagne. This circumstance illustrates the curious reciprocity that marks the interweaving karmic lines of "fortune's favored soldiers." Ireland, in the previous century, had provided Charlemagne with tutors he could find nowhere else in Christendom. Through the influence of the Irish scholars, Charlemagne "sent forth the famous capitularies of 787 and the following years, which enforced the establishment of schools in connexion with every abbey in his realm, and laid the new foundation of medieval learning."

It was no accident of birth that brought John Scotus to Ireland, nor is it difficult to conjecture why "Erigena," suggesting the Greek name for Erin, *Ierna,* the "Sacred Isle," was added to his name. Ireland had not received Christianity until the middle of the fifth century, but, according to Poole's account, after "the preaching of a foreign missionary, saint Patrick," the "newly-planted religion had grown up with astonishing rapidity and strength." Irish missions "pressed forward to make all nations participators in the knowledge of their new faith," and Poole attributes their success in promulgation to the "loose and irregular organisation" of the Celtic church, which afforded its clergy "no hopes of ecclesiastical preferment to tempt them to stay at home: poverty was their natural lot. . . ." But still more remarkable and characteristic was the literary tradition of the Scots:

> Isolated in a remote island the stream of classical learning had remained pure while the rest of Roman Europe had suffered it to be corrupted or dried up in the weary decay of the empire that followed the Teutonic influx. In Ireland it was still fresh and buoyant; and from the Irish it passed back to the continent in greater and greater waves.

Whether it was Christianity that spurred the Irish to "missionary" endeavors, or whether, like Erigena himself, they seized upon an opportunity to disseminate a more ancient wisdom under the guise of the "new faith," cannot be decided upon the evidence available. So much is certain: that, like India at the opposite point on the globe, Ireland preserved the ancient philosophy and the spirit of independent study and promulgation. The towers which, in Theo-

sophical tradition, were planted by Atlantean architects in prehistoric Erin, symbolic dwellings for the fire of truth, are suggestive of the vital impulse imparted by Irish teachers and mystics to medieval Europe. In Poole's phrase, "they brought imagination, as they brought spiritual force, into a world well-nigh sunk in materialism."

Philosophic imagination cannot subsist without a fund of spiritual truth to draw the mind out of the subtle stagnation of intellectuality. The secret doctrine exists, therefore, in every age, to lead the questing devotee beyond the materialism of fixed ideas, and to constantly present to the eye of soul deeper reaches of reality. That a body of knowledge existed on the "Sacred Isle" is thus a necessary preliminary to the appearance of such an one as Erigena, even though his forebears, in a philosophical sense, are for the most part unknown. Some of his precursors in archaic times can perhaps be glimpsed in the allegorical recital of a later Irish scholar, who may well have been conversant with the "archetypal" Erin:

> It was an old and magic island. Many centuries before, the great good Adepts had landed on its shores from the West and established for a while the Truth. But even they could not stay the relentless tread of fate, and knew that this was only a halting place, a spot where should be concentrated spiritual power sufficiently strong to remain as a leaven for several cycles, and that should be a base upon which in long ages after ages might be erected again the spiritual temple of truth. These blessed beings remained there for centuries uncounted, and saw arise out of the adjoining seas other lands, first of soft mud that afterwards hardened into rocks and earth. They taught the people and found them apt students, and from their number drew many disciples who were full of zeal as well as patience and faith. . . . And the Island came to be known as the Isle of Destiny, from mysterious future events foretold for it by the greatest of the Adepts and their seers. (From "The Serpent's Blood," by Wm. Q. Judge.)

An "imaginative writer" under the grandson of Charlemagne reported that "almost all Ireland, regardless of the barrier of the sea, comes flocking to our shores with a troop of philosophers," and the exaggeration is pardonable on the grounds of what Poole identifies as "a certain national jealousy" between the English and

the Scots, but there were also more serious objections to the foreign scholars. Poole explains that the Scots "had, it would seem, with their Greek learning, drawn more deeply from the wells of oriental theology than was approved by the cautious judgement of their age." It is hardly strange, therefore, that eastern mysticism and Platonism were apparently *inherent* ideas with "the greatest philosopher whom Ireland sent forth to glorify the schools of continental Europe," and it was to be expected that before long "the voice of orthodoxy on all sides was directed against Johannes Scotus, the belated disciple of Plato, and the last representative of the Greek spirit in the west."

The close of Erigena's life is not less obscure than its beginning, but Erigena is believed to have taught at the Abbey of Malmesbury, which had been founded by an Irish monk and had a definite tradition of Irish culture. Erigena's biography ends at the Abbey, "where, some years afterward, his scholars stabbed him to death with their pens, *a pueris quos docebat, graphiis perfossus.*" Bett, in his literal fashion, takes exception to this "bizarre climax," without speculating that, metaphorically, it is quite conceivable that the Scot's pupils could have effectively closed his life as teacher by unenlightened skepticism and materialistic thinking. There was also the matter of Papal displeasure at his unorthodox convictions, now that his patron, Charles the Bald, could no longer protect him.

The paucity of details about Erigena's personal existence only serves to highlight his immortality as a thinker. His life, we may think, passed wholly into his teaching. The sparkle and irrepressible enthusiasm of his discourse is the sign of one who found metaphysical thought an ultimate challenge and a daily responsibility. Erigena pursued the meaning of human evolution with fearless faith in the perfectibility of man, and this innate principle is sufficient in itself to set him apart from all satisfied minds. The attempt to cramp him within the confines of Catholic theology and dogma, however broadly construed, must always fail: when Christianity is philosophical enough to give "the greatest minds their fullest scope" Erigena may be numbered among its disciples, but the possibility is infinitely remote.

Bett, who appears to regret that Erigena and the Church of Rome have not settled their differences, is nevertheless consistent in recog-

nizing the universality of Erigena's thought—a catholicity the Church could scarcely abide in the ninth century, and toward which it has grown steadily more hostile. Bett observes with the utmost candor that—

> The most general impression which the system of Erigena leaves upon the mind of the student is that of intellectual vastness. The problem of universal existence is seen in its whole range, reaching from eternity to eternity. The profoundest conceptions of religion and of philosophy are used with an unconstrained freedom, and thought is never checked by anything but the reverence that it owes to itself.

Poole notes that "Authority is still a power with him, but limited, expanded, refined. The name of the fathers, of Augustin himself, cannot deter him from forming his own conclusions on any subject." The unmistakable self-reliance that imparts vigor and persuasiveness to Erigena's exposition of time-honored doctrines is suggested by Bett:

> No philosopher was ever less original, in the narrower sense, than Erigena. It would be easy to find in the pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine, a source for almost every single thought in the Scot's system. Yet, on the other hand, he is by no means a mere compiler. . . . It was only a metaphysician of great insight who could have found all that he needed in the incomplete and disorderly literature to which he had access, and it was only a philosopher of great speculative power who could have wrought it all into so massive a system.

Proceeding as he does without the clarifying principle of reincarnation, Bett is naturally at a loss to account for the accuracy of Erigena's Platonic intuitions. "We arrive," he says, "at the rather paradoxical position that Erigena, who became the principal medium by which the thoughts of Neoplatonism passed over into the mysticism of the later Middle Ages, and into some of the Renaissance philosophies, had never himself come into direct contact with any of the great Neoplatonist writers, and had only a very slight and secondhand knowledge of Plato himself."

It should be considered, with respect to a germinal thinker like Erigena, that the extent of his "direct contact" with ancient philosophy need not be limited by the particular writings to which he had

access. The knowledge he displayed of the fundamental tenets of the Wisdom Religion could not have been acquired in one lifetime, and the unhesitating manner in which he turned the crude material of Biblical theology into analogues for profound philosophical conceptions is enough to show that he was drawing upon and re-presenting "knowledge that was his in former births." Poole remarks that Erigena "discovered in Christianity the germs of all truth. Not only the idea of Christ but all those understood in dogmatic Christianity he applied and enlarged in such a manner that the result was rather a philosophy of religion, than a philosophy of Christianity: and thus to theology he contributed little that it could accept. . . . He advanced so far in the direction of giving new meanings to old phrases that he was, speaking generally, unintelligible to his age."

Bett's chapter on the influence of Erigena upon later times gathers the complicated threads connecting the ninth-century scholar with subsequent generations of seekers after truth. Again, it is chiefly by inference that the real essence Erigena transmitted to his "successors" can be estimated at all. "Direct contact" with the Scot's writings is established in the case of the Albigenses and other heretical sects of the Middle Ages, but who can say how many "Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit," how many solitary students, secret communities and concealed schools, were heartened by the words Erigena had been able to write and fathomed the meanings he could only suggest?

The Papal condemnation, coming several centuries after Erigena's death, may have enjoined silence upon his beneficiaries, but the doctrines he expounded continued to reappear. One writer in the thirteenth century, David of Dinant, taught "a frank Pantheism," by reason of what Bett considers "a reckless development of Erigena's doctrine"! David postulated a proposition familiar to students of *The Secret Doctrine*. He affirmed that "The first and final substance, the principle of all existence, is matter, which, conceived as the source of all intelligence, may be called intelligence, and conceived as absolute actuality, may be called God." This was also a doctrine advanced by Albert the Great (Albertus Magnus). Erigena's influence proceeded through Meister Eckhart and the German mystics as well as through Nicholas of Cusa and some of the

Renaissance philosophies. Giordano Bruno and Spinoza, the Kabalists who wrote the medieval version of the *Zohar,* and Hegel—all have debts to Erigena, and to the earlier philosophers whose work Erigena continued.

The theosophist may pay tribute to John Scotus Erigena as a finger-post of the Middle Ages and identify the theosophical tenets contained in his teaching, but Erigena deserves more than a scholastic recognition. In an epoch of religious confusion, his work should find many "currents of rebirth" among those who need a transition from the best elements of Christian thought to a pure philosophy. Erigena's thought (to be summarized in later issues of THEOSOPHY), will, if assimilated, afford a means of contacting more directly a mind that is growing out of the hard shell of religious materialism. Erigena breeds a respect for the philosophy of Jesus, or, for what H. P. Blavatsky termed the "esoteric character of the Gospels." To awaken popular interest in such a "Christian" may be impossible, but the attempt would not be fruitless. More than a few, baffled and uncertain in the midst of problems their religion fails to solve, would have a natural affinity for one called "the loneliest figure in the history of European thought."

Mme. Blavatsky prophesied that dogmatic Christianity would not outlive the twentieth century, but Erigena's Christianity, being an aspect of the Wisdom-Religion, has the time-limit of truth.

SHADOWS OF THE EGO

The corporeal body of man is a collocation of invisible essences, and if these are taken away, it ceases to exist. Though it is the combination of the incorporeal which constitutes the corporeal, the former does not cease to be in the process, and does not even cease to possess its immutable rest; as shadows are made out of light and bodies, but the light and the bodies do not give up their own existence to make the shadows, and when the shadows disappear we know that they are resolved once more into light and bodies, neither of which have been modified in any way by the existence of the shadows.

—ERIGENA

SALVATION BY PHILOSOPHY

THE paucity of philosophy and the scientific spirit in organized religion, particularly in the West, has resulted for the conventional man in an almost exclusively emotional approach to religious subjects. The history of belief in revelation, "miracles," and divine intervention may be considered indicative of a predominant trend towards psychic, rather than mental, emphasis. The "Personal God" idea is a natural symbol of this tendency. While the real function of religion, by definition, is to aid men to understand relationships between themselves and the total pattern of life, *blind belief* and *revelation* have led to a stultification of the inquiring mind, and a corresponding pre-occupation with feelings alone.

The God-idea, from its subtlest forms in Catholic scholastic philosophy to its crudest manifestations as "fundamentalist" Old Testament religion, is clearly the materialization of a metaphysical conception. It is very easy to understand a man's inability to feel that he has solved the problem of "ultimate causal reality." But the man who is learning to come to constructive terms with life keeps searching until he finds a fully appropriate symbol. The God-Idea must have been adopted from other causes than the profundity of the problem—perhaps men were discouraged in their search for ultimate reality. The God-Idea seems clearly to have been a palliative for those who were afraid to stand alone, who wished to pass their responsibility for their own lives to someone or something else. The conventional Christian Deity, originally the Jewish tribal God Jehovah, has ruled on the throne of fear, and has been sustained by a desire on the part of men to avoid facing full responsibility for their own destinies.

The Personal God has served as a fully appropriate symbol only for those who have sought reality in terms of the physical and emotional aspects of life, for God rules only because he is a more powerful *personal* being. He is presumably a being who loves and hates, and who rules in an inexplicable manner. One seeks toleration from this sort of God through the physical paraphernalia of ritual

and supplication, while God's self-styled representatives agree thus to care for the "souls" of "sinful" men through semi-material means, with the mutual expectation that pre-occupation with personal matters will preclude sufficient concentration of the individual upon the needs of soul. The idea of soul has, then, in the West particularly, lost its proper significance as the basis for a belief in the responsibility and free-will of the individual. The body has been thought of as "having" a soul, rather than the soul as "having" a body.

This is a form of materialism, for it suggests that man himself, unaided by external powers, is unable to be more than an irresponsible animal. And materialism, the seeking of security primarily by external rather than internal means, is a bulwark for an attitude of individual irresponsibility. If the guarantees offered by a church in terms of a materially pleasing heaven are to be the ultimately desirable standards of living—if, that is, man's destiny *is* material—it also follows that man's origin should be purely material, due to the operation of humanly incomprehensible and uncontrollable processes. There are only two philosophies on the subject of man's origin. The first, that he is the ultimate creator of his own destiny, and the second, that he is not *himself* responsible, since he neither did nor can have much to say about the matter—an external God or an external Cosmic Process being the responsible party. The totalitarianisms of this and every age play upon the petty fears and petty ambitions of men who are led to believe in their negligible importance as individuals, their only hope for happiness or security being within the framework of the commands given them by their rulers.

Man is potentially a being of individual responsibility, but to the degree that he accepts the premise of a personal, external God, he has basis only for a doctrine of irresponsibility. Perception of this clear relationship between the Personal God and the attitude of individual moral irresponsibility must have been in Professor Albert Einstein's mind when he addressed a conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion with the plea to give up the doctrine of a Personal God—that "source of fear and hope which in the past placed such vast power in the hands of priests" and which can wreak "incalculable harm to human progress."

The effort of all Great Teachers has been the same—to break the molds of men's minds, to free them from the chains of crystallized dogma, to wear down the psychic "ruts" in which they have become fixed. They knew that if men would think for themselves, all other things "would be added unto them." H. P. Blavatsky once wrote, "Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth, with 'an inspiration of his own' to solve the universal problems."

"EXTREME ACTIVITY"

So long as we are in this world of phenomena, we cannot be *entirely* rid of a sense of personality, however exalted that feeling may be in the sense that no feeling of *personal* aggrandisement or ambition remains. We are, by our constitution and state of evolution, placed in the "World of Relativity," but as we find that *impersonality* and non-duality is the ultimate end of cosmic evolution, we have to endeavour to work along with Nature, and not place ourselves in opposition to its inherent impulse which must ultimately assert itself. To oppose it, must necessitate suffering, since a weaker force, in its egotism, tries to array itself against the *universal* law. All that the occultist does, is to *hasten* this process, by allowing his Will to act in unison with the Cosmic Will or the Demiurgic Mind, which can be done by successfully checking the vain attempt of *personality* to assert itself in opposition to the former.

Hence, the vigilant watch of the "Will" we have constantly to exercise to prevent our lower nature from coming up to the surface, which it does in our present undeveloped state; and thus extreme activity and not passivity is the essential condition with which the student has to commence. First his activity is directed to check the opposing influence of the "lower self"; and, when that is conquered, his untrammelled Will centred in his higher (real) "self," continues to work most efficaciously and actively in unison with the cosmic ideation in the "Divine Mind." —H. P. BLAVATSKY

SCIENCE NEWS AND NOTES

The Equilibrium of Nature

PROOFS of the cyclic rise and fall of civilizations slowly accumulate. Interest in this fundamental research is likely to be intensified with the present gradual dissolution of what goes by the name of civilization, in the wake of scientific progress and invention. After all the insane dreams of material well-being, unrelated to an integration of spiritual purposes, it is not unreasonable to suppose that satiety and fear will bring humanity to a realization that periodicity of cultures, no less than of seasons, is a doctrine as old as man:

> Manu, Hermes, the Chaldees, all antiquity, believed in this. Twice already has the face of the globe been changed by fire, and twice by water, since man appeared on it. As land needs rest and renovation, new forces, and a change for its soil, so does water. Thence arises a periodical redistribution of land and water, change of climate, etc., all brought on by geological revolution, and ending in a final change of the axis. (*S.D.* II, 726.)

Man himself is growing up, and has become a more responsible factor in geological revolution and the redistribution of land and water. His feats of irrigation are only to be compared with his wasteful exploitation of the soil and its fertility.

Some of the facts about population, food, and land, as these affect the future, are well established. Mr. A. J. Wakefield, at a meeting of the Royal Society of Arts, said that during the next twenty-four years it was authoritatively estimated that the world needed a hundred per cent increase in food production; yet the food producing areas were now smaller by several million acres. Britain is particularly vulnerable (London *Times,* April 21). Mr. Walter C. Lowdermilk, who has proposed a Jordan Valley Authority for Palestine, similar to the Tennessee Valley Authority, pointed out in a broadcast that the world population in 1900 was 1.6 billions, and, in 1945, it was 2¼ billions, an increase of 642 millions in forty-five years, notwithstanding two devastating world wars (*The Listener,* April 15). On the other hand, the United Nations study of food throughout the world for 1939 yielded startling

results. In that year, more than half the population of the world was under-nourished. Only a third of the population had food enough. Less than ten per cent had over 3,000 calories per person. Mr. Lowdermilk's interpretation of the facts is poignant in its criticism and implications:

> Hunger is much worse today than before the war. Civilisation is running a race with famine, and the issue is still in doubt. Hungry people neither keep their treaties, nor the peace. Hungry people will sell their liberties for food when driven to extremes of this tragic choice. When food fails, all else fails—civilisation falls apart. . . . The partnership of land and farmer in growing food, fibres and fats is the rock foundation of our complex social structure.

Apart from the human tragedy involved in the growing pressure of population upon seemingly diminishing resources of food and raw materials, there is one aspect of the matter which is especially interesting to the student of nature in a larger field. It would be too much to expect our experts to admit a vital relationship between human consciousness, at its present stage of evolution, and the globe on which we live. Yet occult philosophy teaches that the globe, no less than man on it, generally speaking, "is, so far, in its *Kama-rupa* state—the astral body of desires, of *Ahamkara,* dark Egotism, the progeny of *Mahat* on the lower plane" (*S.D.* I, 260). Because of this phenomenon, it should not surprise us that the susceptibility of nature to man's desires is indicated in the alarming tendency to soil erosion and devitalization. Greed and selfishness bring their own reward in the death of the land, and the great disturber of the balance of Nature is man himself. Those who doubt the proposition should read what science itself says on the point. Our quotation is from *Science: A New Outline,* by J. W. N. Sullivan (London, 1935):

> The great disturber of this state of equilibrium is man. . . . The delicacy and complication of the balance of nature has only recently been recognized. Almost everything that man does destroys this balance, often in quite unthought of ways.

In 1939, Mr. G. V. Jacks and Mr. R. O. Whyte published an engrossing study of soil erosion, its causes and results, called *The Rape of the Earth.* An echo of the ancient teachings is heard in their statement: "The earth is continuously discarding its old worn-

out skin and renewing its living sheath of soil from the dead rock beneath" (p. 18). They blamed an amoral applied science as the prime cause of the dangerous state of exhaustion in which many new countries find themselves today. "Cultivation of the soil became a means to wealth instead of a mode of life," was their verdict on the evidence:

> Within the space of a century, half the world gained the blessings of civilization and paid for them mainly with its soil. . . . The cost must be counted in falling harvests, spreading deserts, droughts, dust storms, floods, poverty and wide-spread social unrest on the land, where most revolutions start (p. 283).

The world-wide effect of this avarice of man was shown by Mr. Lowdermilk in his broadcast. In a century the United States has destroyed, with the aid of tempered steel tools and powered machinery, an area the size of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Every year the United States is losing from soil erosion 500,000 acres of good farm land, in spite of conservation measures. Soil erosion goes on elsewhere at rates faster than present efforts to control it—South Africa, Australia, South America, China, Korea, North Africa, and the Middle East, are all ravaged.

In a recorded fragment of the "mythical" Hermes we read:

> The creation of Life by the Sun is as continuous as his light; nothing arrests or limits it. Around him, like an army of satellites, are innumerable choirs of genii. These dwell in the neighbourhood of the Immortals, and thence watch over human beings. They fulfil the will of the gods (Karma) by means of storms, tempests, transitions of fire and earthquakes; likewise by famines and wars, for the punishment of impiety. (Quoted in *S.D.* I, 294.)

This will sound like arrant superstition to modern ears deafened by the obscurities of dialectical materialism in its various forms; but of the impiety and its punishment there can be no doubt. Mr. Lowdermilk gave illustrations from history, past and present. They are worth recording at this time:

> Before and during Roman times, the lands of North Africa and the Middle East were carefully farmed. Measures for conservation of water and soil had reached remarkable refinements. Slopes were terraced to prevent erosion. Grain, oil and wine were produced abundantly not only for the large local population, but for export to Rome. . . . Today, great cities of marble are

being excavated out of the debris of erosion which had covered these cities in the past thousand years. In Transjordan, the great city of Jerash was in Greek and Roman times the centre of a population of 250,000. Today it is being excavated from erosional debris that was washed from higher farm lands. A meagre village with low standards of living is all that stands in the place of this great city. . . . In Northern Syria, south of Antioch, I found erosion at its worst over an area of more than 1,000,000 acres. This region once supplied Rome with its finest oils and wines. Today, stark ruins of stone buildings, of villages and market towns, stand lifeless as ghosts.

Is it possible to compute what mankind has lost by its negation of the living garment of Nature? We have spat in the faces of our Teachers, with what dire results we have seen in this one field of food production. The truth is before us:

> The Kabiri were the instructors of mankind in agriculture, because they were the *regents* over the seasons and Cosmic cycles. Hence it was they who regulated, as planetary Spirits or "Angels" (messengers), the mysteries of the *art* of agriculture. (*S.D.* I, 642 fn.)

MAN-MADE NATURE

Among the Adepts the rise and fall of nations and civilizations are subjects which are studied under the great cyclic movements. They hold that there is an indissoluble connection between man and every event that takes place on this globe, not only the ordinary changes in politics and social life, but all the happenings in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. The changes in the seasons are for and through man; the great upheavals of continents, the movements of immense glaciers, the terrific eruptions of volcanoes, or the sudden overflowings of great rivers, all are for and through man, whether he be conscious of it or present or absent. And they tell of great changes in the inclination of the axis of the earth, past and to come, all due to man.

This doctrine is incomprehensible to the Western mind, for it is hidden from observation, opposed to tradition and contradicted by education. But the Theosophist who has passed beyond the elementary stages knows that it is true nevertheless. —W.Q.J.

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

SOMETIMES *there are so many things we ought to do that we don't find time or feel free to do the things we really* want *to do. How are we to resolve this situation? It seems to be the basis for all we hear about "frustration."*

If we ourselves have arrived at the conviction that we ought to do a certain thing, it will also be that which we want to do. The word "ought" implies a perceived necessity, and we cannot be frustrated when we are doing what we see *needs* to be done. If, however, we act according to another's convictions—submitted to, but not shared—we are denying our own. This is the basis for one kind of frustration, and can only be eliminated by a determined stand on the basis of what we really believe.

Freedom from undue influence by other men is only part of the process, however. Each man must keep himself free from the domination of his own lower nature, lest it becloud his real convictions. If a man is going to work with or for other men, if he is going to really enjoy living with himself, he will have to thwart certain impulses—but this does not mean that the man has to be in any way frustrated. He is undertaking a course of discipline with a definite end in view. When a man gives up what he sees are unconstructive wants, he creates—not frustration—but friction by means of which he may travel into a larger world than the one he has been living in. Expansion in ideas and outlook is a process of growth which inevitably shatters the structure of many "wants."

Is betting contrary to theosophical principles? Some say you can't bet if you know about Karma, since betting is just a way of trying to "get something for nothing." Yet from another viewpoint, you couldn't win any money that wasn't karmically yours.

It is possible to have too wooden an idea of Karma, to think that somewhere there is a special package marked with our name and containing a certain sum of happiness or sorrow, money or the lack of it, which is going to be, someday, "karmically ours." Now, if man is a creator, he actually owns nothing, but he can force nature to give him all that he desires, whether it be gold ore from the earth, or gold from his fellows. We have, eventually,

unlimited power—to take, or to give. The choice between these alternatives is the final business of the human being.

Everything that comes to us *is* karmically ours, but each time Karma brings it, we have to decide if it is *morally* ours. A thief may steal $20, for instance: it was *karma,* in the form of his own actions, which brought him the money, but this does not mean that *justice* was done. "Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic law adjusts the effects." Money gained or lost indicates nothing in itself as to the moral quality of the act, and it is mere sophistry to defend gambling as a reliance on the law of justice. We can decide the question only in terms of what we think we are; where we are going, and whether we go by and for ourselves alone, or with and for all others too.

The story is told of an old Italian immigrant who, unable to get a job during the depression, was on relief; yet every day he could be seen sweeping the streets of a certain section of the city. Someone asked him once why he did that, since he didn't need to in order to eat. His answer was: "My bread is sweet." Do not most people have inherent in them an integrity which demands that they take only what they can see they have earned?

It often happens that two different people making the same criticism can affect us in entirely different ways. Why should this be? It doesn't seem to be a good thing at all.

No, it doesn't. In the *Transactions* (p. 44), H. P. Blavatsky speaks of "sounds which taste exceedingly acid in the mouths of some sensitives, while others generate the taste of sweetness." Every person puts into his remarks his own particular quality, and this motivation of speech makes itself felt in others, since all men are sensitives and clairvoyants to some extent. We know that what people resent more than criticism itself is a supercilious or derogatory attitude. The converse is true, also, and makes understandable the statement of one of Mr. Judge's students, who said that many would rather have been scolded and corrected by Mr. Judge than praised by anyone else.

But specific feelings can also be "read into" another's speech: self-interest or self-centeredness may cause a man to suspect a

personal attack in a well-meant suggestion. If a man would be a truth-seeker, he must be more interested in the truth than in the apparent perfections or imperfections of the person who voices it. Isn't this one meaning of impersonality—the ability to consider ourselves and others as we are now, carrying over no warping psychic prepossessions from the past?

A common tendency, for example, is to form a snap judgment of a new acquaintance—or to make a "permanent print" of a familiar companion—and thereafter think of that person in terms of the picture we have made of him, rather than as he presently is. Mr. Judge once wrote, "I care not what I *was,* or what any one *was.* I only look for what I am each moment." We can never, with justice, click the shutter on a final picture of another man. This would mean a stoppage of forward motion—for ourselves. A *manasic* memory of past experiences and relations with others yields discrimination, but a residue of prejudice and preconception can lead only in the direction of a feud.

Many people are interested in Theosophy when they find that it postulates "spiritual" evolution, but they balk at the idea of the permanence of soul. Is there any way to get around this reluctance?

This skepticism of scientific minds is not surprising, when we consider the idea of soul which has been put forward by religion. If souls are created by God, and endowed by him with their various qualities, evolution in any meaningful sense goes out the window. It would be as ridiculous as saying that a child was progressing when he was only being led on a tether. Rather than approaching a scientific student with the idea of the individual soul, then, it might be more appropriate to point, with him, to the patent fact of evolution in every kingdom of nature and deduce from such universal testimony the necessary presence of an inherent power to move and grow in every form and being there is. This power is "manifested" in man as the soul—and this progresses, as does everything which science has so far discovered, by an orderly process of law. This is Karma, and from a perception that this law applies as much to the thinking nature as it does to the body of man, reincarnation becomes a necessary doctrine.

"THE PATH" AND THE T.S.

The Oriental Department: American Section

THE year 1891 is to mark an era in the Theosophical Society. The General Secretary desires to announce that with the consent of the Executive Committee he will begin this month the work of the Oriental Department in order to carry out more effectually than ever before the second object of the Society—*the investigation of Aryan and other religions, sciences, and literature.* It is purposed to procure articles or translations relating to eastern religions, philosophies, literature, folk-lore, social customs and observances from competent Hindus, Parsees, and other Asiatic members and persons. These will be issued in pamphlet form monthly or oftener as funds allow, and will be distributed free to all Branches and members-at-large in good standing.

An extension of this scheme includes the employment of pandits —scholars—in India and elsewhere as soon as the funds come to hand. It is obvious to anyone who will inspect the cash book that our funds will not now permit of the enlargement of this scheme, but it could be put into extensive operation at once if members would give more than the small fee required by the Constitution. Through this Department the General Secretary hopes to be able to furnish a fund of valuable and interesting information such as cannot be otherwise obtained except at great expense for books and other means of study. It is certain that what little has been said to our people by interested missionaries and travellers has been very wide of truth in respect to the people of Asia, their manners, customs, literature, and social life. Indeed, but little can be got from Asiatics by such agents, and it is believed that only through our Society the real truth may be reached. Such a general and correct knowledge of distant people, all brothers of the human family, will do much to enlarge the boundaries of our thoughts, to abate

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Note.—These articles by Wm. Q. Judge first appeared as editorials in his magazine, *The Path.* Printed respectively in February and April, 1891, and March, 1892, they encompass H. P. Blavatsky's passing in May, 1891—an event which bears out Mr. Judge's opening sentence.—Eds. Theosophy.

race prejudice, and in all ways tend to strengthen the feeling of brotherhood which it is the aim of the Theosophical Society to arouse. Nor is there any reason why the T.S. should not be a great Asiatic investigating Society. * * *

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE
General Secretary

FIVE YEARS FINISHED

About eighteen hundred and twenty-five days have slipped away since the *Path* was started, and now we enter upon the sixth year without any prospect of having to abandon the work. If asked whether we feel satisfaction regarding the five years finished last month, the reply must be that it is too soon to look for satisfaction. A great many persons have praised and blamed the magazine and its editor; he himself never had any great concern with what people think about it, but an effort has always been made to present what we feel is true, free from bias or desire for gain. In the course of a few centuries and in other lives, it will be possible to find out just what influence the *Path* has exerted. Just now we must content ourselves with offering thanks to those who with pen or money have assisted this most obscure journal, and to direct their attention to the new American theosophical year, which, beginning in April with the *Path's,* has so much of promise and potency for the future. Let us grasp the thread once more!

SIX YEARS GONE

Six years have gone into the void since the *Path* was started, and we are still in the middle of eternity. Doubtless other ages have had their magazines with their articles, their hopes and fears, their subscribers, their complainers, their friends. This journal has had the usual complainers, but can best and most easily remember that its friends are numerous.

The original program has been adhered to, the propelling motive is the same, the guiding object remains in view, the policy outlined has not been departed from. The *Path* has no party to placate, no ulterior aims to forward. Hence its independence is secured, since it bows the knee to no man, to no authority, although it seeks and

will so seek to abide by the rules of the Theosophical Society as well as those prescribed of old for conduct and for intercourse.

In its pages attempt has been made to present the common-sense of theosophy, because it knows that, sadly enough, many theosophists cease to use their natural common-sense when dealing with the movement and its literature. One will say "Theosophy tells me to give up my duties and my family ties, to neglect my friends, and to live in a morbid mental condition," while Theosophy looks sadly on and wonders why men and women will thus misconstrue.

These six years have witnessed the rise and fall of some men and women, but the last year now finished has had to chronicle the departure of our great leader, our friend, our champion, adept in all the noble arts of righteous war—H. P. Blavatsky. It was as if a mighty tower had fallen, causing the whole theosophic body corporate to quiver for a space. That was but momentary, for the great forces that had held the tower in place at once transferred themselves throughout the whole range of the Society, informing it with added energy, new zeal, and greater strength.

So this year, while seeing such a catastrophe, saw also but three short months afterwards the whole Society welded together under one working plan, with a single method, a Constitution in all its sections modelled on brotherhood and following the plan of the American Section which this journal always advocated. To our feelings the death of the body called H. P. Blavatsky was a shock and loss, but for our true progress, for the health of our real nature, it was a gain because it makes us stand alone. Man was born alone, must stand alone, die alone,—so he must needs be strong.

Thanks, then, comrades, for your help, your appreciation, your judgment and suggestions. The year is past in form, 'tis true, but still it is with us. We need no resolves for the future, for we never touch it; we need no regret for the past, for we have not lost anything, but have the gaining eternally of experience. Adieu, twelve months, the path still stretches on and ever upward!

MIND OF THE AGE

V: Freudianism vs. Religion

WHILE it is an oversimplification to state that the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud have become a structural part of the modern mind, it is nonetheless true that the influence of the Viennese psychoanalyst has been a profound catalytic agent in molding the thinking of the whole western world. Freud did not accomplish this singlehanded. Heir to the "liberated" research and re-thinking of the human dilemma that followed the Renaissance, Freud carried the new point of view boldly into matters of personal psychology. He raised questions which no others quite dared to ask concerning the propensities of the human mind, in a manner similar to that employed by Darwin in his relentless analysis of biological evolution, and, like Darwin, Freud soon became the spearhead for a growing movement of opinion which in turn shocked and inspired.

Every student of psychology knows there is a vast difference between Freud's actual theories and their popular and distorted derivatives. More important, however, than any of Freud's theories, is the use made of him by the general public. For in the final analysis we must seek the understanding of the modern mind, not in the work of any theorist, whether ignoble or inspired, but in the apparently imponderable *why* of popular adaptation. Freud, like Darwin, moved the world of mind because enough men wanted to be moved, were waiting to find an impetus, and felt that the new theories provided a feasible point of departure for things that they might derive satisfaction from believing.

One of the clearest explanations of "Freudian" belief is to be found in Macneile Dixon's *Human Situation,* although the author was discussing neither Freud nor psychology per se:

> Christianity took upon itself an intellectual burden never contemplated by its Founder, a burden it was unfitted to bear. For the souls afraid, mortally afraid of life—and how many they be, and have reason to be—Christianity came with healing in its wings. But to the lovers of life and the world, fascinated by the

> wide range of its vital and vivid interests, its sunlit landscape, the brave show of its human figures and enterprises, Christianity had no clear message.
>
> Take a single illustration. Let us ask, 'What has Christianity to say of love between the sexes?'—surely a subject of central importance. Apparently not a word, or a derogatory word. Yet here you have a subject which more than any other has occupied the attention of the poets and artists, indeed all mankind, which gives rise to half, and more than half, of all the pains and pleasures of life, plays a leading part in every activity, creates family relationships, running through human existence like the veins through the body, omnipresent, entering into association with every side of our conduct and on every day we live, leading to crimes, treacheries, self-sacrifice, heroism, eternally occupying the thoughts of society, and present in all its conversations. Upon this transcendent theme with its endless ethical ramifications, a strange silence reigns in the Christian documents.

The reason for the "silence" was simple enough; Christian theology made one un-retractable pronouncement—that all of the impulses of the flesh were evil. This having been said, there was little else to say on the matter of "love." Remained but the matter of classifying the types and seriousness of sins, and of trying to establish a reputation for formal virtue by means of repressing "fleshly desires." (The early Church, be it noted by the way, was consistent enough to see that this doctrine applied not alone to relations between the opposite sexes but to all matters of *sensuous* enjoyment, *i.e.,* the production and appreciation of all art forms which represented the body or the emotions in other than morbid fashion. This offers a logical enough reason why Greek forms of art were banned until after the first successful surge of the rebellious Renaissance.) Repression for the sake of personal merit, once condemned by Patanjali and other Eastern Sages, was the keynote of theological morality, and led to every form of rationalized and unrationalized sexual and emotional perversion. Freud, as a young Viennese doctor, participated in an investigation of hysteria which revealed to him the extent to which mental maladies were correlated with conflicting feelings of lust and guilt, and these he guardedly referred to an origin in Christian theology. He talked openly of sex in a fashion shocking to many of his medical contemporaries, being himself dedicated to the belief that only when false prudery

was eliminated would man come to have a healthy regard for the total human being and thus be able to prevent unnecessary insanity.

Men and women were ready for some version of the Freudian thesis principally because they were tired of a "repression" they could not understand nor feel to be valuable.

The earliest exponents of Freudianism were, in the early days of martyrdom for the new sect, primarily "lovers of life," and only secondarily researchers into the roots of common mental disorders. That is, they *trusted* what they thought to be the goodness and beauty of all natural processes, and believed that morbid psychological states were the result of fearing life rather than an inevitable part of human existence. They distrusted any theological notion which proclaimed the innate depravity of man, the pre-ordained unseemliness of all sexual expression and the desirability of fear. Freud's theories, again like Darwin's, extended rather than lessened human stature in the minds of his disciples. Whatever might be discovered was good because it was true. If Darwin showed that men were closely related to animals, why, how good it was to recognize a further closer kinship among all creatures; if Freud showed that sex was inextricably intertwined with nearly all human activity, why, how good it was to know this so that we might more intelligently deal with our passions and conflicts!

To rid oneself and then society of fear—how noble a goal! The new world was to strive to become brave and natural. Yet, somewhere, something went wrong. In the field of human relationships a great many dimensions of life were overlooked, not so much by Freud, as is often assumed—although his starting-points, in reasoning about the nature of man, were undoubtedly materialistic—nor by Darwin, but by the eager enthusiasts who borrowed rather than helped to create the "new and healthy view." Freud's frank discussions of sex in all of its phases were taken as justification for the avowal of frank sensualism. And the brave new world did not become happy through its rather licentious interpretation of Freud's admonition to "escape from the inhibitions of the super-ego." These were, in Freud's terms, the *perverted* repressions of feeling, generated in a culture possessing a false moral structure. Freud believed simply that many poor inhibitions needed to be traded for a few

useful ones. Yet popular Freudism finally found a peculiarly warped expression among hundreds of thousands of the well-to-do, who excused an increasing use of intoxicants and an increasing marital infidelity on the ground that they must "forget inhibitions."

It has been the old, old story of a structure demolished by artisans as yet poorly schooled in the technique of erecting a new edifice. It is just as "natural" to feel that moral ideals are involved in all questions pertaining to sex as it is to rebel against the rule-of-thumb morality manufactured by medieval theology. To neglect to choose all psycho-physiological experiences with an eye to the constructive purpose to be achieved is to deny a hearing to a most important part of one's self, just as did the unnatural repressions of authoritarian morality in an earlier epoch. Yet, in the modern world, where is it possible to find a balance between these extremes? The educators have divided themselves into two warring camps. On the one hand we have Bertrand Russell, and on the other, Reinhold Niebuhr; or, John Dewey versus Robert Hutchins. Bernard Shaw counters the Archbishop of Canterbury, and, finally, the "free love" protagonist Wilhelm Reich opposes Pope Pius XII. On a grand scale we have the Gandhian civilization of self-denial versus the American civilization of self-enjoyment. All of these contrasts are between world views directly pertinent to the proper use of man's capacity to live constructively in a sensuous world. It is a debate that rages within art, music and literature, reflected in the differing values of the various schools of authors, painters and musicians. Where is the synthesis? For only a synthesis can save our sanity. Unthinking indulgence, whether it be in the notion of our own irresponsibility as God's sinful creatures or in common sensual license, is productive of a further increase of psycho-neuroticism.

The soul and the body have to be able to get along in brotherly fashion, and this cannot happen until man in his inner life strikes the true balance between the spiritual and the sensuous worlds. The problem is lodged in the *mind* of the age, but focusses in the internal confusion of the single individual. Where is man's real life to be lived? "Our world," wrote H. P. Blavatsky, "is an artificial one." Yet this world is not *absolute* illusion, but rather reality in curious disguise.

Theosophy is thus a system of "*objective* Idealism." Although the present objective Universe is but an evanescent clothing for the real world of mind, "esoteric philosophy . . . draws a practical distinction between collective illusion . . . and the objective relations in it between various conscious *Egos* so long as this illusion lasts." The conditions which provide the soul with an area of experience and interaction with other souls are necessary to evolution. *The Secret Doctrine* does not concede reality to either Spirit or Matter as separate from each other, for it teaches that "in the manifested Universe there is 'that' which links spirit to matter, subject to object." This connecting force, in the individual, is mind. By its power to create and outlive relative illusions, the mind links the soul to the body and personality.

The Race of Immortality

Nature never leaves her work unfinished; if baffled at the first attempt, she tries again. When she evolves a human embryo, the intention is that a man shall be perfected—physically, intellectually, and spiritually. His body is to grow mature, wear out, and die; his mind unfold, ripen, and be harmoniously balanced; his divine spirit illuminate and blend easily with the *inner* man. No human being completes its grand cycle, or the "circle of necessity," until all these are accomplished. As the laggards in a race struggle and plod in their first quarter while the victor darts past the goal, so, in the race of immortality, some souls outspeed all the rest and reach the end, while their myriad competitors are toiling under the load of matter, close to the starting point. Some unfortunates fall out entirely, and lose all chance of the prize; some retrace their steps and begin again.

The cause of reincarnation is ignorance of our senses, and the idea that there is any reality in the world, anything except abstract existence. Thus, like the revolutions of a wheel, there is a regular succession of death and birth, the moral cause of which is the cleaving to existing objects, while the instrumental cause is *karma* (the power which controls the universe, prompting it to activity), merit and demerit. —*Isis Unveiled*

ON THE LOOKOUT

Abolishing the Death Penalty

The past months have witnessed an attempt in England to abolish the death penalty for murder. The House of Commons passed, in April, a bill which would suspend the use of capital punishment for cases of murder for an experimental period of five years. Submitted to the House of Lords, however, the bill received a sharp refusal—181 to 28 voted to retain the death penalty, and this, supplemented by reportedly great public pressure, brought from the Government a compromise bill calling for retention of the death penalty as punishment for 10 types of murder embodying "expressed malice."

The final Parliamentary judgment on the matter is still in the future, but despite the strong possibility that the compromise bill will be accepted, theosophists can find much encouragement in the fact that such a vigorous attempt at abolition is being made. A writer in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* for June 17 briefed the situation with regard to the Government's proposal: "It can be regarded as a staging camp—not quite a half-way house—on the road towards total abolition."

A Conviction Supported

Contending against the stubborn belief that the threat of death is the strongest deterrent to crime, another British weekly, the *New Statesman and Nation* (April 10) cites the example of other European countries:

> The facts from abolitionist countries of many races and types of civilisation prove that the murder rate is unaffected by abolition: Sweden, Holland, New Zealand with sparse rural population, Belgium with its dense industrial concentration (not to mention a score of others) have one factor in common: *not one has experienced any rise in the murder rate in the years following abolition.* Public opinion in Belgium in 1919 was shaken by an epidemic of cruel murders by burning. Influential voices demanded the death penalty for the murder gangs, but the Cabinet stood firm and refused to revert to the barbarities of sixty years earlier. The

> murders ceased. Had capital punishment been re-introduced, this would have been acclaimed as its triumph of deterrence in the violent aftermath of war.

It is evident that the ability to stand by a decision to abolish the capital sentence can come only from a conviction that Right in very truth makes Might, and that the *moral* force of a Jesus cannot be sifted through the eye-for-an-eye psychology. To temper such a conviction out of the soft metal of a man's natural reluctance to take another's life requires, we believe, a perception of the reality of soul and the radical unity of mankind, whether formulated or purely intuitive.

"The Easiest Answer"

The *Manchester Guardian,* convinced that "whatever compromise Parliament accepts this summer will not be the final word," proceeds to the central problem: Granted that capital punishment is barbaric, what reasonable and humane alternative exists?

> In the course of time, the reformers will carry the day, for their case is sound and humane, but before that can happen they must set about educating public opinion and they must grapple in particular with the question of alternative punishment for the really black-hearted murderer. Far too little attention has been paid to both matters. Every year three or four murderers are convicted whom it would be dangerous to release after ten or a dozen years' imprisonment. A longer sentence, according to expert opinion, is almost as merciless and damaging as an extreme penalty. Death is the easiest answer, especially for those of us wholly unconnected with the State's grim machinery of death. But it is not the real answer in a civilised community. . . .

The Psychology of Punishment

There can be no quarrel with this conclusion, nor with the fact that prison conditions can make a "life sentence" almost as soul-searing as the death penalty. The solution, in theosophical terms, lies behind all "alternative punishments" whatever. It is this very psychology of punishment—which is only the human extension of the invidious concept of a personal god—which Theosophy indicates as the prime factor in the production of every crime. Restraint of the physical man; education of the mental and emotional man—

these are the only attitudes which Theosophy countenances as either effective or justified. Punishment, in itself, never restrains a man from evil doing. On the contrary, it encourages him to evil, for it inevitably creates in his heart resentment and fear—and these are the roots of crime. Repudiation of the principle of punishment may thus be seen to underlie the classic theosophical argument against capital punishment:

> When . . . the mere physical body is so treated that a sudden, premature separation from the real man is effected, he is merely dazed for a time, after which he wakes up in the atmosphere of the earth, fully a sentient living being save for the body. He sees the people, he sees and feels again the pursuit of him by the law. His passions are alive. He has become a raging fire, a mass of hate; the victim of his fellows and of his own crime. Few of us are able, even under favorable circumstances, to admit ourselves as wholly wrong and to say that punishment inflicted on us by man is right and just, and the criminal has only hate and desire for revenge. ("Theosophy and Capital Punishment," THEOSOPHY III, 569.)

The rationale of this description of the after-death state of the executed criminal can be verified to an extent by a study of the effect of imprisonment on men. Under the old penal system, now fortunately being challenged and partially replaced, a man was thrown into jail, cut off from human contact, from all constructive activity, and thus encouraged to brood over the sequence of his crime, capture and conviction, strengthening in himself precisely those anti-social emotions which brought him to crime. Due to the efforts of men such as Warden Lewis Lawes, the significant work of prison reform is more and more seen to lie, not in the betterment of physical surroundings, but in the abolition of the psychology of punishment. Even as alcoholism and insanity are regarded as forms of illness, so crime, too, must be seen as the activity of a partially deranged mind, and, wrote H. P. Blavatsky, "the true physician cures the disease, and does not kill his patient."

"A SADISTIC RITE"

Such, too, is the conclusion of Dr. Amos O. Squire, chief physician at Sing Sing Prison from 1914 to 1925. Dr. Squire, retiring at the age of 72, has behind him a record of 138 executions

of murderers and 11,000 on-the-scene investigations of homicides and other sudden deaths. As reported in the New York *Times,* (March 9)—

> Dr. Squire served in the Sing Sing death house at a time when the prison doctor gave the signal for sending 2,200 volts coursing through a condemned person's body.
>
> "The horror of that one duty grew on me until it was more than I could endure," he said. The doctor found himself so overwrought that in using the stethoscope he could scarcely tell his own pulse from that of a condemned man. . . .
>
> Murderers, Dr. Squire believes, are of four types and none is deterred by capital punishment. The insane, he contends, have no fear of execution; those motivated by violent emotions are indifferent to death; gangsters consider "the chair" just another professional risk, and schemers believe themselves too clever to be caught.

Dr. Squire, it is suggested by the *Times,* may publish "his belief that capital punishment is no deterrent to crime and should be abolished as a sadistic rite belonging in the same category as burning at the stake, boiling in oil, beheading and maiming." We can hope that his views will find wide currency.

Fossil Remains of Apes

Press reports state that the palaeontological party of the University of California's African expedition has discovered in the Turkana province of northern Kenya, near Lodwar, the fossil remains of apes which Dr. Wendell Phillips, the expedition leader, estimates to be twenty million years old. The London *Times* (April 21) mentions that the discoveries consist of the right half of the lower jaw of a young ape, and the two upper teeth of another. Two different types of apes are involved—one the size of a monkey and the other of a chimpanzee. The material has been sent to Prof. Le Gros Clark (Department of Human Anatomy, Oxford University), who is working on the related fossils discovered by Dr. L. S. B. Leakey on Rusinga Island, Lake Victoria. All the material has been found in association with primitive crocodiles, elephants, pigs, and rodents, and one interesting fossil is a turtle seven feet long and four feet wide. Whether these discoveries "will play an

important part in unravelling the story of human evolution" (as the *Times* suggests) remains to be seen. The descent of man from the ape is not held so dogmatically today.

THE EMERGENCE OF MAN

The fact is that the fossil record of human evolution is far from complete. Nothing has occurred to modify in any way the conclusion reached by Mr. J. W. N. Sullivan in *Science: A New Outline* (1935). He summarised the position briefly in these words:

> Man's nearest relatives are the so-called anthropoid apes—the orang, chimpanzee, gorilla, and gibbon, and it is supposed that these, together with man, are descended from a common stock. The history of this descent is not yet known. . . . The remains of primitive man that have been discovered do not form a connected series leading us from some ape-like ancestor on to modern man. From the human remains that have been found it is impossible to reconstruct the history of the development of our own species. It may be that present man is descended from a blend, as it were, of two or more of these primitive types. There are various and conflicting opinions on this point.

Mr. Sullivan thus pointed to the same questions as those asked by Prof. T. H. Huxley long ago in his famous lecture, "Man's Place in Nature":

> Was the oldest *homo sapiens* Pliocene or Miocene or yet more ancient? In still older strata do the fossilized bones of an ape more anthropoid, or a man more pithecoid than any yet known, await the researches of some unborn palaeontologist?

Certainly, the associated materials found recently by scientists in Africa suggest an older man than Pliocene or Miocene, even on the Darwinian hypothesis.

"APE-MEN OR MAN-APES"

Some collateral discoveries in South Africa were the subject of a broadcast under this title by Prof. Le Gros Clark (*The Listener*, April 1). In 1924 the skull of an immature creature of ape-like appearance, together with an almost complete natural cast of the inside of the skull, was found in some limestone workings in Bechuanaland. Since 1936, several skulls of adults of the same fossil group have come to light. Dr. Raymond Dart, Professor

of Anatomy in the Witwatersrand University of Johannesburg, gave the name *Australopithecus* to this extinct group of Primates. These South African fossils are not supposed to go further back than the period of Huxley's Pliocene or Miocene *Homo sapiens.* "A comparative study of the extinct types of animal whose remains have been found with them," says Prof. Le Gros Clark, "indicates that they date either from the beginning of the Pleistocene age or from the latter part of the Pliocene. The weight of expert opinion, on the whole, favours an antiquity of late Pliocene date, that is, something over one million years ago." In the effort to cling to the Darwinian theory of descent, emphasis has now shifted from brain to limbs. "It is now clear," Professor Le Gros Clark informs us, "that these fossil creatures (the *Australopithecinae*) were equipped with limbs very similar to those of man and quite distinct from those characteristic of modern apes." He even goes so far as to suggest that these South African discoveries point to a quite different opinion from that held by some anatomists—that the expansion of the brain preceded the evolutionary development of limbs of human type. It is now thought possible that "the expansion and elaboration of the brain followed, and were perhaps conditioned by, the perfection of the limbs for an erect mode of progression."

Wild Theories of Descent

The search for "missing links" will go on for a long time to come, even though science may entertain the unspoken fear that, without a very definite ancient link between man and ape, it is faced with a *Homo sapiens* sprung miraculously in nature! Prof. Le Gros Clark is adamant on the point that "a study of the endocranial cast does not permit any legitimate conclusions regarding the power of speech." No one knows better than he that "A *human* brain is necessary for *human* speech," as H. P. Blavatsky declared (*S.D.* II, 661). The fact is that anthropology cannot get rid of its obsession by the only two theories considered permissible to account for the emergence of man—Darwinian anthropology and the Biblical exoteric account. "The anthropology of the secret volumes is, however, the best possible answer to such a worthless contention," for "the human type is the repertory of all potential organic forms, and the central point from which these latter radiate" (*S.D.* II, 689

and 683). (The reader who wishes to compare theosophical theories with scientific speculation in regard to the geologic ages should refer to H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine,* II, 709, the section of "Supplementary Remarks on Esoteric Geological Chronology"; for the occult doctrine on the "appearance" of man, *S.D.* II, 9, 72, 157, 160 and 251.)

HUXLEY AND ETHICS

Only once has the famous Romanes Lecture at Oxford University been given by a man and his grandson. In 1893, Thomas Henry Huxley gave his famous address on "Evolution and Ethics," and in 1943, Dr. Julian Huxley delivered a lecture on the same general subject. The two lectures have just been published in one volume, *Evolution and Ethics (1893-1943).* It was the elder Huxley's contention that while the "cosmic process" explained the method by which man had climbed the evolutionary ladder, the beneficent "ethical process" came into play only on the final rungs, enabling humanity to live in societies, and making civilization a possibility. But Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace maintained that from the commencement men lived socially in tribes and communities, and their view prevailed over that of the redoubtable Thomas Henry Huxley. The "cosmic process" became associated in this way only with struggle between human societies. No one today believes, with the elder Huxley, that the ethical process has attained victory!

CHANGING HUMAN NATURE

Sir Arthur Keith F.R.S., in a review of *Evolution and Ethics* (London *Sunday Times,* Feb. 15), illustrates the distinctive attitudes of Huxley and his grandson by quoting their views on the possibility of changing the nature of mankind by judicious breeding:

> Not for want of will on the part of a great many people; but because, for one reason, there is no hope that mere human beings will ever possess enough intelligence to select the fittest.
> (T.H.H., 1893)
>
> And in so far as the mechanism of evolution ceases to be blind and automatic and becomes conscious, ethics can be injected into the evolutionary process. (J. H., 1943)

In other words, the elder Huxley hesitated to attribute sufficient intelligence even to human beings; the younger believes that the

human mind can transfer its operations from automatism to a consciously directed intervention on the side of ethics in an otherwise presumably blind process of evolution. Dr. Julian Huxley would be horrified (as would his grandfather have been) at the suggestion that, conceivably, the whole evolutionary movement—cosmic and human—is imbued with consciousness, not necessarily "human"! Yet, such is the proposition of the esoteric philosophy.

Force and Ethics

The moral perplexities and inevitable choice involved in the arbitrary conception of a cosmic process at war with ethical values, earlier or later in evolution, are clearly indicated by Sir Arthur Keith in these ironic words:

> I have never been able to regard actions which involve the application of brutal force as coming within the realm of ethics; war and all its implications belong to the elder Huxley's cosmic code of morals. This is not Dr. Julian Huxley's opinion; bombs have a place in his system of ethics. "The dropping of the two atomic bombs on Japan," he writes, "has initiated a drastic change in our ethical system." The only kind of bomb which may be regarded as "ethical" in my opinion, is that of the Marshall order which the United States proposes to drop on Europe; all other bombs belong to the "cosmic process." And even the Marshall bomb the U.S.S.R. regard as belonging to the cosmic order.

"The Occultists believe in an *inherent law* of progressive *development* . . . checked and modified, however, by the *Law of Retardation,* which imposes a restriction on the advance of all species when a Higher Type makes its appearance" (*S.D.* II, 260 and fn.).

Theories of Evolution

As H. P. Blavatsky never tired of pointing out, the assumption of the orthodox theory of evolution, that there is "a constant, ever-flowing progress in every species of being," man included, is without foundation:

> While the intermediate groups of animal being all tend toward a higher type, and while specializations, now of one type and now of another, develop through the geological ages, change forms, assume new shapes, appear and disappear with a kaleidoscopic

> rapidity in the description of palaeontologists from one period to another, the two solitary exceptions to the general rule are those at the two opposite poles of life and type, namely—Man *and the lower genera of being.* (*S.D.* II, 256.)

The fact is that the ideological conquest of Western scientific thought by the Darwinian hypothesis, has resulted in the retardation of ideas in all "civilized" countries. The alternatives to this restrictive theory were cited by H. P. Blavatsky. She even mentioned where, in then contemporary publications, the revolt against "the mental representation of *Evolution* in the Scientific brain of a materialist" was taking shape. The history of the intervening years might have been very different if only these alternatives had been more widely recognized and accepted. In the interests of our scientific readers, note may be made here of four at least of these bibliographical references: N. T. Danilevsky, *Darwinism: A Critical Investigation of the Theory.* Dr. Bourges (Member of the Paris Anthropological Society), Paper on *Evolutionary Psychology.* N. N. Strachof, *Fundamental Conceptions of Psychology and Physiology.* De Quatrefages, *The Human Species.*

Will no one resurrect these learned works and discuss them in face of the moral bewilderment of this modern age?

Where Life Begins

A recent news conference given by members of the Atomic Energy Commission gives evidence that scientific investigators can meet the mind of the inquiring layman with fairness and interest even though their respective approaches to the subject of Man may vary considerably. Mrs. Elizabeth May Craig, correspondent for several New England papers, put some basic questions to the scientists, as reported in the New York *Times* (July 25).

> "I would like to know if you think you are getting at the secret of where life begins?" asked Mrs. Craig, who also likes to throw elemental questions at President Truman.
>
> The officials all looked at Dr. James A. Jensen, director of its Biological Division.
>
> "I think the answer would be yes," Dr. Jensen began bravely, "for the reason that it is impossible to push back the barriers of the knowledge of biology without understanding more about life."

Much later in the conference Mrs. Craig asked: "If you are finding out what life is, what is it that departs at death?"

"It would sound very silly on my part to reply that when life departs, death begins," Dr. Jensen replied. "That is about the size of it."

"You don't know what it is that happens?"

"There are a number of things that happen, of course," Dr. Jensen answered, "but what the precise thing is, the spiritual aspect of it, has not been investigated scientifically."

Continual Change

Meanwhile, biological research corroborates the idea that the human body undergoes a complete change every seven years. By the use of radioactive isotopes it is possible to trace the course of an element or foodstuff through the body, demonstrating, according to the Commission's Report—

> that all components of the body—the muscles, bones and teeth as well as blood, secretions and food stores—are in a constant state of breaking down and renewal. . . . The multitude of life compounds involved in this process go through continuous and rapid chemical reactions, many of them reversible. Those not serving at any given moment as part of the fixed structure, and not excreted from the body, are combined into a metabolic 'pool' of life ingredients available for use anywhere in the body.

Salt, "tagged" or irradiated and injected into the arm, was observed within a minute to be passing through the walls of veins and coming out on the other side of the body in sweat.

Thus, although not including investigation of the "spiritual aspect" of "what departs at death," the Commission's report gives expression to the ancient doctrine termed in Sanscrit, *Nitya Pralaya* —the perpetual change of atoms, disintegration of molecules, and hence change of forms. Theosophically considered, this constant dissolution of forms is the natural opposite of *Nitya Sarga*—constant creation or evolution. The creative and preservative force of "life" or soul maintains a *continuing* pattern in the midst of physical change.

A. E.—"A Practising Yogin"

Readers of the semicentennial edition of *Letters That Have Helped Me* will remember with gratitude the inclusion of some

biographical notes based on additional material taken from Jasper Niemand's four-part story of William Quan Judge, published by A. E. (George Russell) in *The Irish Theosophist,* beginning in February, 1896. A.E.'s own defence of Mr. Judge will be known to all students of the history of the Theosophical Movement in the nineteenth century. A.E. died not so many years ago, and his biography (except for John Eglinton's *Memoir*) remains to be written. Meanwhile, memories of this famous Irish poet, painter, mystic, and editor of *The Irish Statesman,* continue to appear. The latest writer to mention him is another well-known Irish writer, Mr. James Stephens, who has contributed some reminiscences over the English broadcasting system (*The Listener,* January 22).

Mr. Stephens tells how A.E. "held a class twice every week in which he discoursed tirelessly on the meditation of divinity. . . . He was reputed to be the greatest authority on the Advaita philosophy outside of India":

> I asked him where he got all the energy from, and he answered that he got it from a sinking of himself into that meditation which is known in every system as "the practice of the presence of God."

"POLITICAL" INFLUENCE

A.E. further informed Mr. Stephens that he remembered seven of his (A.E.'s) previous incarnations—three of them in Ireland. He was what has been called "a practical mystic," and a friend and consultant of Mr. Stephens tells us that A.E. and Arthur Balfour exchanged "a fairly regular correspondence on philosophy in general, and on the artistic and spiritual idea of beauty in particular." Dr. Oliver Gogarty said of him: "I remember A.E. for his goodness." (Discussion of A.E.'s connection with the Theosophical Movement in the last century, and especially with Wm. Q. Judge, will be found in THEOSOPHY XXVI, 192 and 382, and XXIV, 136. Other references to A.E. and his writings are XI, 532; XVII, 475; and XXX, 415.)

THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

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The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

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"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

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